



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CDC RELEASES SMALLPOX INFORMATION FOR CLINICIANS **Unprecedented mailing to reach 3.5 million health care professionals**

Today the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began mailing smallpox information packets to 3.5 million clinicians nationwide as part of the agency's established plan to educate medical professionals about smallpox and the smallpox vaccine.

"Ensuring clinicians have accurate information about smallpox is critical as we continue to work to enhance our nation's preparedness for a possible terrorism attack," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "This mailing is unprecedented and the information in these packets is a valuable resource to those healthcare providers on the frontlines who would be the first ones to recognize smallpox cases."

The packet includes up to date information that will help clinicians identify a case of smallpox, recognize and manage patients with an adverse reaction to the vaccine, and help others make decisions about receiving the vaccine. The packet contains:

1. **Evaluating Patients for Smallpox** – a poster with color pictures to assist clinicians assess patients who present with rash illnesses.
2. **Smallpox Vaccination Methods and Reactions** – a pocket guide with color pictures and information about smallpox vaccination, responses to vaccination, and adverse reactions.
3. **Vaccine Information Statement** – a three page document being used in vaccination clinics across the country with information about who should get vaccinated, associated risks, and information regarding adverse reactions.

Included in the mailing is an invitation for clinicians to join a registry. The registry will provide real-time information to help health care professionals prepare for possible terrorism events. Clinicians who choose to register will receive regular e-mail updates on terrorism preparedness issues as well as training opportunities.

Over the past year CDC has provided numerous educational tools and training programs to public health agencies, clinicians and health care providers to enhance their knowledge of smallpox disease and immunization.

The CDC is reaching health care providers through a variety of formats. In October, the agency introduced comprehensive, web-based training to assist clinicians in monitoring and treating adverse reactions following vaccination. In January, CDC published updated clinical guidance (*Smallpox Vaccination and Adverse Reactions: Guidance for Clinicians*, MMWR, 52, RR04) and released a corresponding teaching tool to assist clinician specialists in training other clinicians in their communities. A satellite training course of this material (*Clinical Management of Adverse Events following Smallpox Vaccination: A National Training Initiative*, February 4, 2003) was broadcast live

and continues to be available through web streaming or videotape. Information about CDC's training tools for clinicians can be found at www.cdc.gov/smallpox.

Additional information about smallpox can be found on web sites of both the Department of Health and Human Services and CDC (www.smallpox.gov; www.cdc.gov/smallpox), including fact sheets on:

- Smallpox Disease
- Smallpox Vaccine
- Who Should NOT Receive the Smallpox Vaccine?
- Reactions After Smallpox Vaccine
- Information on Live Virus Vaccines and Vaccinia
- Frequently Asked Questions

The materials are available in Spanish at www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/basics/español.

CDC has also established a public information hotline for questions about smallpox and smallpox vaccine at 888-246-2675; Spanish 888-246-2857; TTY 866-874-2646. The hotline staff has responded to thousands of calls about smallpox and smallpox vaccine.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES